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THE LATINITY FETISH

As a working definition, a "fetish" may be described as an object of superstitious reverence. Although Lowell exhibited no semasiological accuracy in explaining superstition as a survival of a worn-out form of belief, the actual use of the word in that sense is often very convenient. The veneration of a fetish begins to wane either when it is shown to be intrinsically less worthy of such veneration than was supposed, or when the march of progress makes it ill-adapted to present conditions. The contention of this paper is that the particular fetish mentioned in its title should, for both the foregoing reasons, at least claim a smaller share of attention than it has been hitherto awarded.

Any living organism is undergoing constant change. Some things are being sloughed off, and some new tissue is growing. A granite rock is a very respectable mass of matter; it has, however, no vital force. But neither a pansy nor a man is ever exactly the same on any two successive days. Nor are any two pansy blossoms exactly alike. The glory of each living organism is in its individuality. A language is a living thing so long as it is undergoing constant change, and as people use it with the freedom and variety of individuality. When its form becomes rigid, and its aspect is the same from every point of view, it is bad. From Plautus to Horace and from Cato to Livy was a far cry; but the space was full of the rushing life of Roman thought corresponding to the ever-changing life of the people and the state. In the heyday of Roman comedy, however, nobody had discovered the fatal secret that its master might be guilty of Plautinity; while the empire was just rising on the ruins of the republic when the cry of Patavinity was raised. Henceforth the attempt to freeze poetry into the mold of the Vergilian style, and prose into that of Cicero's stately products resulted in a lifeless and monotonous feast of reason and flow of soul. Not only was the substance more and more lacking in the qualities that nourish, but it soon came to have too little body to maintain even the desired form, and the artificial literature of high "Latinity" fell, a flimsy fragment, a shell without a kernel.

Here and there, however, an independent, a free-lance in literature, struck out a new form and spoke a new message, and the spark of literary life flamed up again. Petronius was more careless of literary conventionalities than the proverbial Gallio; and to him with a sigh of relief we turn our minds jaded with the elaborate imitations of his contemporary Persius. And if the truth should be told about Seneca, that other strange product of the same brilliantly wicked age of Nero, do we most relish his stately experiments in imitating the antiquated tragedies of the Greeks or his attempt to atone with a

theoretical philosophy of life for his practical violation of the principles he sets forth at such length? or the unconventional diatribe upon the dead Claudius, in which he throws form to the winds and we see the heart of the man and the hateful world in which he lives? There was no other Cicero, no Vergil the second, no Horace the third. But with the decay of old faiths and the growth of the new world-religion of Christianity there came in a new prose and poetry which had its own great truth to tell in its own way. And on through the centuries of the middle ages there were those in Italy, in Gaul, in Spain, in England, in Germany, who in history, or controversy, or didactic verse, or song, sacred or secular, had each his message for the world.

Why have we not continued to read these best examples of Latin, written not merely a century or two just before and after the Christian era, but during the last two millennia? Because the spectre of 'Latinity' has been omnipresent. For a while previous to the revival of learning this ghost was apparently laid; but, with the coming of Petrarch and the renaissance of classical ideals and the new worship of classical forms, Latin was slain in the house of its friends. Six centuries have passed away since the birth of Petrarch, and the slow pendulum of literary esteem may be discerned moving back towards a more universal appreciation of all that is good in Latin literature. For some time collections of patristic Latin and of the best of the 15th and 16th century Latin literature have been in progress of publication on the continent. A recent volume of that popular collection of books of *Weisheit und Schönheit*, published in the German language at Stuttgart, consists of tales and satires translated from the Latin. Of these only a few from Apuleius, Petronius and Prudentius belong to that field of Roman literature where 'Latinity' is supposed to hold sway; while the bulk of the book is made up of stories by Notker of St. Gall, satires of Amarcus, and selections from Wirecker, Gervasius, Eberhardus, Teutonicus, and from the *Dialogus Miraculorum* of Caesar of Heisterbach. Mr. Percy Ure in a recent issue of the *Classical Review*, after reviewing the new volume of *Die Kultur der Gegenwart*, which deals with the Greek and Latin languages and literatures, feels moved to fall into line with Wilamowitz and the other authors of that book, and asks: "Ought we not in England to extend our curricula, at least in the seats of higher education? Is it desirable that our university students (and lecturers?) should practically never read anything written in Greek after Theocritus, or in Latin after Tacitus?" Two or three of our American preparatory Latin textbooks have rather timidly ventured into the broader field in their selection of passages to be read by the young

student in the early stages of his acquaintance with the language. But the consultation of college catalogues will show but slight opportunity as yet for more advanced students to go outside the sacred inclosure dominated by the Latinity fetish.

Why should we longer hold fast to the tradition of the Pharisaical elders who began to exalt 'Latinity' thus, only after the palmy days of Latinity were gone? To Cicero 'Latinity' was the avoidance of solecisms and of barbarisms, not a comparison of all Latin with his own orations and with his contemporary Julius Caesar's journal of campaigns in Gaul. Pray where did Horace, with his *curiosa felicitas* and his dainty aroma of the cedar in which for years had lain his unfinished product waiting for the ultimate file, learn Latin? Why, forsooth, from a crude translation of a Greek poem made by a Greek slave before there were any standards of Latinity or any Latin literature to which to apply them! Yet the Grecisms, and archaisms, and colloquialisms, and juicelessness of Livius Andronicus, though so laboriously flogged into Flaccus by Orbilius the *plagosus*, apparently did him no harm, while Orbilius never stopped to consider their serious defects from the purists' standpoint of Latinity. When Horace railed at the carelessness of Lucilius, did he cease to read him because of his bad Latinity? or did he rather imitate his good points and avoid his faults? The grammar of Plautus and his diction are as far removed from the Latinity of Livy as Livy's is from that of Ausonius; but the critics did not stop reading Plautus in the days of Livy. By the time of Priscian a couplet of Pacuvius might be cited to illustrate a grammatical curiosity; while in Cicero the same passage might be quoted for its literary value. Was Pacuvius to be ruled out of the classical galaxy because he used *incurvicervicus* and *prolixitudo*, *matresco* and *taetro*, and because nearly one-half of his experiments in word-formation failed to meet with the permanent approval of the Roman literary world? Did anybody shy at Lucretius because he refused to be universally orthodox or consistent in his treatment of prepositions and infinitives, because his poetry was sometimes prosaic, and because he preferred to end his hexameters in ponderous polysyllables?

Quintilian's cautiousness in regard to the alleged 'Patavinity' of Livy is worthy of our emulation. "Asinius Pollio", says he, "thinks that a kind of Patavinity is to be found in Titus Livy, in spite of his amazing fluency". What, by the way, would Pollio have said to that word, *facundia*, used here by Quintilian? For neither Livy, Cicero nor Caesar ever ventured to write it. Surely to the fastidious Pollio it would have been conclusive proof of the hopeless provincialism of its Spanish-born friend, an instance of rank *Calagurritanitas*! Once

more, however, we hear Quintilian speaking of the famous criticism, when he says that while Pollio detects Patavinity in Livy, for his part everything Italian is Roman, as contrasted with any real barbarism. Which of us has been able to detect Livy's Patavinity? Quintilian evidently could not. Nor did he think the attempt worth while, for towards the close of the same paragraph he enunciates the universal truth which should still have recognition: *sed auctoritatem consuetudo superavit*. And in the ever-changing form of the Latin language there has ever been, of course, a present 'custom' which justly overrode 'tradition'.

Why, then, should we slight Boethius, or elevate our eyebrows at mention of Aulus Gellius? Why need we be ashamed to delve into the church fathers or to read the 'Venerable Bede'? Why not give even younger students selections from Einhard's life of Charlemagne, from the hymns of the Church, from the declamations of Melancthon, from the colloquia of Erasmus, from the great mass of lyric and dramatic Latin poetry which European scholars have thrown off on occasion during the last fifteen centuries?

I take up Gellius, to see wherein consist his sins against Latinity, why it would be dangerous to bring up boys on his anecdotes, and open at his tale of Fabricius and the gift offered him by the Samnites (1.14). The first thing that causes one to stop is the use of *familia* in the sense of 'property'. But this goes back to the Twelve Tables, and was considered good usage by Cicero. *Tamquam* introducing an assigned reason was good Latinity in the eyes of Tacitus. The collocation *redditam pacem* can be charged with nothing more serious than being a token of the author's individuality. The purpose dative *dono* used alone, with *obtulisse*, is also along the natural line of development according to Tacitean standards. The phrase *lautum paratum esse* is one in which *paratum* appears to be used as a substantive with the force of *apparatum*. If we grant this at once, without arguing the question of the text or of other possible explanations, grammatically speaking, we have indeed a phenomenon unparalleled perhaps in the 'golden age', but not unlike many a substantive used in the generations following that age. Finally, though *propterea* alone is less common, and looks forward more often than back, its use in the latter sense is classical from the time of Terence. Surely the immature mind, under the direction of a competent teacher, runs no risk of being radically corrupted in ideals of Latinity while reading this neat little anecdote of Gellius.

Or I turn to a paragraph of Erasmus, in his story of the priest, the vendor, and the impostor; and now the purists vociferate, "procul, o procul este, profani!" But with rash persistence I read:

'Sacrificus quidam receperat mediocre summam pecuniae, sed argenteae. Id impostor quidam animadverterat. Adiit sacrificum, qui gestabat in zona crumenam nummis turgidam; salutatur civiliter; narrat sibi datum negotium', etc. Here, to be sure, is a different atmosphere. We note the loose, narrative style, but must not fail to recall Terence's similar manner, in the Andria, for example. We admit promptly that *sacrificus*, *impostor*, and *parochus*, in the sense used here, are non-classical; that *commodare* with such an object as *tantillum operae* is comparatively modern; that *vehementer congruere* and *mire congruere* referring to well-fitting clothes sound a little like the present-day German slang use of 'kolossal'! But how often Lucretius and Cicero felt constrained to apologize for the new words and new meanings of words which their subjects demanded! And was not in his own day and generation a living Erasmus better than a dead Marcus Tullius?

I glance at a convenient edition of Gnaphey's Acolastus, the Latin play on the story of the prodigal son, first published nearly 400 years ago at Antwerp, and I see eight pages of closely printed references to passages in classical writers used by the author. Surely a scholar so saturated with the spirit of the ancients as that ought to be able in dealing with so interesting and suitable a subject to teach a reader some good Latin and not utterly to ruin his appreciation of classical Latinity!

Or at random I read one of the lyrics of Joannes Posthius, entitled De Suo Amore:

Iuppiter horrendo contristans frigore caelum
Sarmatico largas fundit ab axe nives,
Nostra tamen rapidis uruntur pectora flammis,
Nec minuunt ignes frigora tanta meos;
Quin magis accendunt etiam (quis credere possit?)
Et gelida flagrans de nive crescit amor,
Nunc etenim recolo mecum, ut mea saepe puella
De nive compactis luserit ante pilis.
Nix, fateor, primos mihi conciliavit amores:
Hinc eadem flammis auget alitque meas.

Where in all Latin literature shall we look for a more dainty conceit or for more unimpeachable Latin? At sound of it the Gradus ad Parnassum and the Anti-barbarus exchange significant glances, relapse into their most complacent smile, and make no move at all to descend from the shelf.

The truth of it is that the Latin of the 16th century A. D., or even of the 19th, is more like that of the 2d century B. C. than the English of to-day is like the English of a period one quarter as long ago. The artificial form of the champions of literary conservatism has, to be sure, long since lost some of its potency. But it was as foolish to try to maintain Cicero's style after the death of its master as it was to attempt the continuance of the republican constitution after the life of the Roman republic

was gone. Cato and Cicero perished in the useless struggle against the politically inevitable; and the best inspiration of Roman literature perished in the struggle against the stylistically inevitable.

How long must we go on sacrificing youthful enthusiasm on the altars of a similar conservatism in the worship of the Latinity fetish? Granting that Caesar, Cicero and Vergil are the best models of Latinity, can we claim that the centuries have shown that the youthful mind waxes enthusiastic over them, appreciates them, and assimilates their style, as shown by their Latin prose composition exercises? What would you think of the pedagogical wisdom of a teacher who should introduce a beginner into English by making him read blocks of from 25 to 50 lines a day, for several years, of Macaulay's History of England, Burke's speeches, and Milton's Paradise Lost? Do we insist on Shakespeare for babes? Do our modern language contemporaries begin with Faust and William Tell? O no! They smear with honey the edges of the bitter cup, and coaxingly inquire, 'Do you see the great green goggles of my red-coated aunt in the long white automobile?' Horace laughed at the conservatism of the schoolmen of his own day, who forced him to learn Latin from Livius Andronicus; but *we* have lost that sense of humor, so far as Latin is concerned, and are still following in the wake of Orbilius. To be consistent, we ought to require every boy to learn his English from Chaucer's Canterbury Tales! As a matter of fact we learn English to-day from the *Times*, Edith Wharton, and Mr. Dooley, while William Shakespeare and Francis Bacon are obliged to wait for a more convenient season. Of whom will our children learn it? Who can tell? That they will learn it, however, we may be sure; nor need we fear that publishers of *de luxe* editions of the English classics will be obliged to go out of business even if George Ade should claim a place on the same shelf with Alexander Pope.

Why not follow nature somewhat more readily in Latin also? A beginning has been made, indeed, in these last days; but, as I have already said, it seems to be too timid, and followed with too little enthusiasm. One of the best, and perhaps the latest, of the books of reading-selections for young students contains, besides the proper amount of Caesar and the purely modern exercises, two selections from Phaedrus, three from Valerius Maximus, two from Pliny's letters, three from Erasmus, four from Horace, and one each from Nepos, Livy, Ovid, Plautus, Catullus, Terence, Vergil, and Tibullus. Good! Why not go still further? Why omit Gellius and Macrobius and Martial? Why not include letters of Lipsius and poems of Scaliger? Why not have more Curtius, and even Velleius Paterculus and Justinus, some Seneca, Suetonius,

Tertullian, Prudentius, Bernard of Cluny, and Thomas a Kempis, not forgetting the inscription upon the "sepulcrum hau pulcrum pulcrae feminae", nor the testamentum porcelli? Why reserve all the tidbits for the occasional student of Roman literature, meanwhile convincing the masses of Latin students that Latin is insufferably dull and that nobody with red blood in his veins would elect it after the stupid days of its requirement are past? Must the traditional curriculum be preserved at any cost?

Perhaps the question is a more practical one than we realize. Curricula are changing. Latin, like Greek, is being jostled from its occupancy of the middle of the road. Doth it not behoove the pedagogical divinities of the Classics for the nonce to set down their ambrosial cups of scholarly investigation, and, forsaking temporarily their intermundian spaces, to descend among men, take human counsel, and observe whether in the unceasing downward procession of the atoms there are any tokens of a speedy dissolution of the world which they have hitherto known?

If the readers of this paper detect in it signs of heterodoxy, it remains for them, as for all seekers for real values, after washing away the useless matter, to discover, underneath, those shining grains of truth which heterodoxy is ever wont to contain.

WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

KARL P. HARRINGTON

REVIEWS

A Students' History of Greece. By J. B. Bury. Edited and Prepared for American High Schools and Academies by Everett Kimball, Associate Professor of History, Smith College. New York: The Macmillan Company (1907). Pp. xviii + 377. 65 Illustrations; 43 Maps.

Those who were introduced to English history through the medium of a small black volume known as 'Collier's' are grateful to that author for at least one 'feature' of his text-book, namely, the prominence he gave to the names of the sovereigns, and their division into dynasties. After groping through a mist of British, Roman, Saxon, and Danish rulers, he came over with the Conqueror into his realm, thereafter fairly revelling in Williams, Henries, and Edwards (whose cognomina were all sorts of Roman numerals), and making not the slightest fuss about knowing the difference between a genuine Lancastrian and one who was merely a Plantagenet or a Tudor. Other histories have their mile-stones also. The Roman is divided by forms of government, and by centuries, the French, perhaps, by the European influence exerted by the nation, the American, by epochs between notable events. But if the student needs such aid more in the case of one nation's history than in that of another, he needs it surely in the case of the ancient Greeks. Such a clue is provided by epochs in the history

of Athens, a state to which it is not difficult to relate almost all events in the ancient Greek world. And while most writers of histories of Greece intended for school and college use have laid more or less stress upon the relations of Athens to the prominent events of which they write, I have seen no text-book superior in this respect to Professor Kimball's edition of Bury's history.

The book consists of twenty chapters. Of these the first four may be considered introductory. Then follow ten in which, while nothing important in the Greek world is omitted, the history of Athens is given from the beginning of the state to the fall of her empire. The attention then wanders in turn to Sparta, to Thebes, and to Syracuse, seeking the new panhellenic leader, until finally the star of mastery is seen to stand above Macedonia. Surely nothing could be clearer, or more satisfactory to the beginner. The clear, forcible language of Professor Bury has been retained in this edition. The editor says in his preface: "In preparing this edition, I have confined myself chiefly to excision, although in places a somewhat different arrangement of material has been adopted. No statement of fact has been changed, and as far as possible the author's exact language has been retained. This is especially true in the chapters dealing with Alexander, where, to keep the spirited account of the original, the proportion of this revision may have been sacrificed". Dr. Kimball has added a number of valuable maps, and the book also contains some well-chosen illustrations which add interest and clearness to the volume, without being numerous enough to detract from the continuity of the text. Students will also be glad to note at the end of each chapter brief suggestions for supplementary reading. References are given to the History Syllabus for Secondary Schools. The index is serviceable, but the publishers might profitably have seen to the marking of the accented syllable in the names of persons and places, as was done in their Botsford's History of Greece. The book is clearly printed on heavy paper, with black type for section topics, and with marginal dates. It is a work which should be of great service in laying a solid foundation for the study of Greek history.

BARRINGER HIGH SCHOOL, Newark, N. J. W. W. KING

Caesar, Gallic War, Books I-IV. By Harold W. Johnston, Indiana University, and F. W. Sanford, University of Nebraska. Boston: Benj. H. Sanborn & Co. (1906). Pp. lx + 359 + 98. The book is physically compact, sound and strong, and feels good in the hand. The type is clear, the page varied and attractive. The cuts are few, but well-selected. The life of Caesar and the military notes are simple, interesting and adequate. The